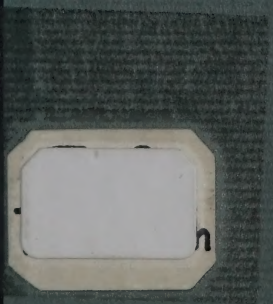
CHARLES PRATT

AN INTERPRETATION

1830—1930

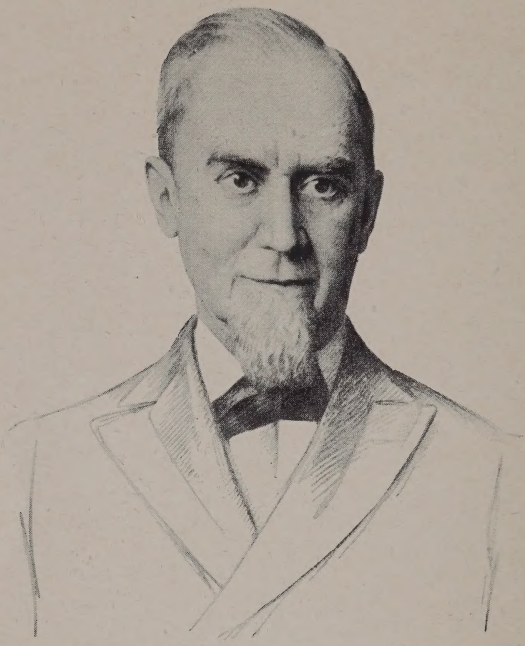


Library of The Theological Seminary
PRINCETON · NEW JERSEY

FROM THE LIBRARY OF
ROBERT ELLIOTT SPEER

BR 1725 .P72 1930
Charles Pratt

CHARLES PRATT



CHARLES PRATT

OCTOBER 2, 1830—MAY 4, 1891

LIBRARY OF PRINCETON
APR 1 1959
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

CHARLES PRATT

AN INTERPRETATION

1830—1930

BROOKLYN, NEW YORK
PRIVATELY PRINTED
1930

CONTENTS

MEMORIES OF MY FATHER
FREDERIC B. PRATT

CHARLES PRATT, AS KNOWN BY HIS PASTOR
JOHN HUMPSTONE

A TRIBUTE TO CHARLES PRATT
HENRY C. FOLGER, JR.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF CHARLES PRATT
CHARLES R. RICHARDS

FOREWORD

IT SEEMS appropriate to recognize the one hundredth anniversary of the birthday of Charles Pratt, Founder of Pratt Institute, which falls on the second of October, 1930, by putting into print a brief sketch of his life, together with an interpretation of his character, and an appreciation of his contributions to education and philanthropy.

The biography is written by his son, and is somewhat personal in character.

The interpretations are derived from the address of his pastor, Rev. John Humpstone, D.D., on the occasion of the services held in memory of Charles Pratt, at the time of his death, and from a Founder's Day address by Henry C. Folger, delivered in 1903. The concluding statement by Charles R. Richards has been especially prepared for this memorial.

No one person could write adequately the biography of Charles Pratt. It is hoped, however, that the statements by these men who knew Mr. Pratt intimately, and viewed his personality from different angles, will give an understanding of the man and his life.

FREDERIC B. PRATT.

September, 1930

MEMORIES OF MY FATHER

FREDERIC B. PRATT

BORN in Watertown, Massachusetts, of a New England ancestry that traced its lineage back to old English stock, Charles Pratt inherited the traits and qualities of character that we associate with the early makers of our country.

Nature endowed Charles Pratt with a small but rugged body and a physical constitution that was full of dynamic energy; but how far nature contributed to his personal qualities of integrity, industry and perseverance, and to what extent these qualities were the result of environment and experiences, we cannot estimate.

One of a family of eleven children, brought up on a small farm where everyone had his particular "chore," he early realized what the struggle for existence meant. He then acquired those habits of economy and frugality, and an impatience with waste that was so characteristic of his life. He then learned to be self-reliant, and to develop his powers of observation, concentration and judgment. He learned to discriminate between the things that were essential and those that were not. It was then and there he acquired a sense of family obligation and responsibility for others. He once wrote: "One of the things that most influenced

my early life was the respect and love I had for my mother. She was not in good health, and I had the care of my younger brothers." That trait was shown throughout his life in his relations with his own children. Always taking a lively interest in their welfare, their education, their sports, their friends, he won their affection, and kept himself young with them. When they went away to school or college his weekly letters kept the home ties strong. In short, his family was the mainspring of his life, and his home was his castle. Into it he brought his friends and relatives, and into its radiance and joy all of his children brought their associates. And in full sympathy with him was our mother whose cordial welcome to everyone made the home a blessing and an influence that has continued into the lives of his grandchildren.

Family prayers were always held on Sunday morning, and Sunday School and Church became the order of our lives. It was natural, therefore, for Charles Pratt to identify himself with a church, as at that time church life expressed the social as well as the spiritual life of the community. A Baptist by faith, he was one of the founders of the Emmanuel Baptist Church in Brooklyn. A generous giver to its support and to its benevolences, Mr. Pratt had a large part in making possible the erection of the beautiful edifice at Lafayette Avenue and St. James Place. He was the pastor's wise and devoted counsellor and was active and influential in the affairs of the Church as President of the Board of Trustees till his death.

Summer vacations were always family matters. Parents and children played together and, as only two years in age intervened between the children, we found companionship among ourselves. Never to be forgotten are the thrills that came when, in the spring, our father would take us fishing and camping with him in the Adirondacks, and ever memorable are the trips to Alaska and Europe, when the whole family traveled together, seeing the same things and enjoying the same experiences. His children can never forget the cheerful greeting, the twinkle of the eyes and the subtle humor that Mr. Pratt showed on these occasions.

To perpetuate this family spirit, Charles Pratt towards the end of his life purchased a tract of 800 acres near Glen Cove, Long Island, called Dosoris, where he established the Manor House for his younger children, and built homes for his sons and daughters when they married. It was his hope that this place, ample in area and beautiful in setting, would attract and hold the younger generations. To-day, forty years after, Dosoris is even more beautiful, and continues to be the summer home of his children and grandchildren. Around it cluster memories of a united family life that are a constant source of joy and inspiration.

Charles Pratt's business career reads almost like a romance. Fortune seemed to favor him in preference to others. At the age of thirteen, he went to Boston as a clerk in a grocery store. A year at Newton, as an

apprentice in the machinist's trade, was followed by a year of formal education at Wilbraham Academy where he managed to live on a dollar a week. His business career really began when he engaged as clerk in a paint and oil shop in Boston, where he remained for three years. His restless ambition, however, led him at the age of twenty-one to New York City. There he entered a similar line of business, finally becoming a partner with Raynolds, Devoe & Pratt, dealers in paints and oils. The discovery at that time of mineral oil, or petroleum, in Pennsylvania, and the possibility of its wider use for illumination, stimulated Charles Pratt's imagination, and he undertook, under the name of Charles Pratt & Company, the refining and manufacturing of petroleum. The best quality of illuminating oil placed upon the market came from his refineries, and was known by his name throughout the world under the trade name "Pratt's Astral Oil," and carried with it a slogan "It will not explode." It is interesting to note, now, that the elements of benzine and gasoline, so dangerous to illuminating oils, are the very elements which are extremely important in our life to-day. Mr. Pratt joined the original Standard Oil Company with some hesitancy, fearing that in a larger organization his own product might lose some of the quality for which he felt a personal responsibility.

With increasing prosperity came the possibility of executing some of his latent desires. Mr. James McGee, a close business associate, said of him: "Business

became to Charles Pratt a platform on which to lift others. It became a mount of vision from which he could contemplate the final subjection of all material things to order and use."

Mr. Pratt was conscious of stewardship in the use of the wealth that had come to him, a responsibility to his fellow men to find and establish means whereby others could overcome more easily the obstacles that had faced him. It is indicative of his shrewd, practical attitude of mind that the channels through which he elected to make his contribution to his community related to homely and simple matters. He believed in offering people opportunity rather than assistance, and felt that the simpler and more available the opportunity, the more permanent value it would have.

Accordingly, one of his first and most practical efforts was the building of the Astral Apartments in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, not far from his own oil refinery. Here was a serious endeavor, and one of the first in the country, to study and meet the housing requirements of a great manufacturing community. He was, no doubt, indebted to George Peabody of London for a precedent for this type of provision, but he adapted the idea to American conditions. He demonstrated the possibility of creating apartment homes for the working people. Homes that would be economical and sanitary, cheerful and convenient. It was a step a generation ahead of his time, but it indicated his fore-

sight and courage. To sense the needs and problems of other people, and to meet these needs in a practical and concrete way, were traits characteristic of Charles Pratt.

Another contribution to human progress was the organization of The Thrift, a banking institution offering attractive means of saving and borrowing money. Mr. Pratt's early training, his business experience and his observation, convinced him of enormous waste everywhere; waste of time, waste of effort, waste of material. To him the corollary of waste was saving. He believed that if people could be taught to save, the problem of waste would solve itself. The plan of The Thrift was suggested by the successful experience of the Birkbeck Building Society in London. The Thrift is to-day a prosperous and growing institution, with thousands of depositors, learning to save by means of regular monthly deposits, and with thousands of borrowers, who are buying their homes by regular monthly payments. To Charles Pratt, the home was the greatest asset in national life. He felt that a home owner became a better and more reliable citizen, and he spared no effort to make home owning a possibility.

Although he was fond of reading, supplementing his knowledge by every available opportunity in the

use of books, Charles Pratt was not a student in the usual sense of the term. The Bible, poetry, oratory and the writings of Benjamin Franklin had great attraction for him. One cannot read his many pithy sayings without realizing that "Poor Richard's Almanac" was their appropriate inspiration. His own lack of systematic education suggested the wide possibilities of self-education through the public library, not then universally prevalent. Thus took form his conception of "a free library for the citizens of Brooklyn" which became an integral part of the great purpose of Pratt Institute in its initial year.

The Pratt Institute Free Library came into being at a critical and opportune moment. No free public library existed, then, in Brooklyn or New York, independent cities at that time. The Carnegie gifts and endowments were yet many years in the future. The Astor and the Lenox libraries were formidable reservoirs of booklore, not inviting the man in the street. The Brooklyn Library was maintained by and for its subscribers. The Union for Christian Work on Schermerhorn Street, alone, in an extremely modest way, exemplified an effort to make books free to all.

The Pratt Library from the beginning has been symbolic of the man who made it possible. Its universality begins with its room for children, the first ever to be expressly designed for their use. The Library operates also for the highly developed technician in the complex performance of the world's work. It must be efficient and effective in its every relation with the

Institute and with the public, and not ever become an accumulation of books, great either in numbers or rarity. To this end, soon after the Library's inception, the need arose for a trained staff to interpret the Founder's idea of a library in action. Thus began the Library School, the second to be established in the history of education, now continuing as the first in point of uninterrupted existence. So the library staff is made up of those trained, not only to make books accessible to every inquirer, but to direct seekers after knowledge quickly to the source of information.

Since the rapid development of the great municipal library systems after the early years of the twentieth century, the Pratt Institute Free Library has found its original mission a continuing one.

From 1856, when the eldest child was born, to 1877, when the youngest was born, Mr. Pratt's children were always about him. It was natural that he should give much thought to their education. This brought him in touch first with Lockwood Academy, a private school on Adelphi Street, and later with the Adelphi Academy, which took its name from the street of its first location. All his children were educated at Adelphi, and Mr. Pratt was for years President of the Board of Trustees. On the occasion of the writer's coming of age, and in honor of the birthday, he gave to the Academy a fund to build a new academic building. In his letter to me regarding this gift, he writes: "My

thought has been, as you may know, to add to the work new features, but as I have worked I have felt it more important to do one thing well, rather than take any chances by going in an unknown way. Now can you in any way see the value to you in this birthday gift? Maybe you cannot see it now, but I feel it has a real value for you."

The idea of an industrial school, where training could be given to young men and women seeking it, was lying dormant for many years in Mr. Pratt's heart, and he now turned his thought to the creation of an institution that would give to others what he had lacked in early life. He recalled his own struggles for an education, and foresaw with unusual intuition the coming of the industrial age with its need for trained men and women. He realized that the existing schools did not comprehend this need, and that it would be necessary for him to create a new type of educational institution.

To us to-day, as we see the development of occupational training and its wide range from the grammar school through the college, it is difficult to realize that Charles Pratt stood almost alone in 1887. Many were the jibes launched at his ideas by his advisers and friends, and many the hesitating doubts that disturbed his mind. Certainly it took courage to persevere in the face of public and private criticism. Fortunate it was that he found three leaders with vision and faith, who were willing to give up their work and follow him: Walter Scott Perry, for forty-two years Director

of the School of Fine and Applied Arts; Charles R. Richards, for ten years Director of the School of Science and Technology, and Miss Margaret Healy, a member of the Founder's family and active in the Library and Department of Domestic Science. The Institute owes much to their fidelity and loyalty.

The Founder, too, found happiness in the fact that his son Frederic, the writer, was willing to take up the Institute work at its inception, and make it his own life work. He, also, expressed the hope that some one of his later descendants would find in the management of the Institute a task worthy of his best endeavors.

The philosophy of education and life which Mr. Pratt had in 1887, when he founded Pratt Institute, is as sound to-day as it was then. To him education in its deepest sense meant experience. He believed that the development of responsibility, initiative and character come from doing things in a real way. The arts, the industries, and the home seemed to him to offer the best opportunities for true education, because their problems are real and concrete. While he never lost sight of the value of machinery in the industrial world, he put his especial emphasis on the value of the worker. To give training to workers, both men and women, and to make them intelligent, competent and happy was his purpose. To put into the commonplaces of the shop and the workroom some of the inspiration of achievement was his ambition. To do, in short, for the ambitious American man and woman some of the

things which, by great effort and sacrifice, he had done for himself was his reason for founding Pratt Institute.

On the morning of May 4, 1891, Charles Pratt paid his usual morning visit to the Institute: in the afternoon of that day he died at his office in New York. Though he died at the age of sixty, he had lived a full and complete life. He had mastered himself, he had prospered in business, he had established his family, and had successfully launched the institution which bears his name. The legacy he left has been faithfully executed by his sons and grandsons, and the Institute, still animated by his spirit, is a growing, virile and successful monument to his name.

CHARLES PRATT AS KNOWN BY HIS PASTOR

REV. JOHN HUMPSTONE, D.D.

MEMORIAL ADDRESS, MAY 7, 1891

HIS removal from us has begun already to make manifest his true proportions. Even those who were nearest to him, and knew him best, only now begin to see how lofty has been the unwavering purpose of his life, how sagacious and practical his methods, how thoroughly unselfish and humble his spirit. Not that we did not recognize these qualities in him from day to day; but that now they are seen, in the unity and perspective of his finished life, to have been even larger and nobler than we supposed.

One who knew and appreciated him described him playfully, on an occasion when he was the guest whom his fellow-citizens had met to honor, as "the modest little man." Modest he ever was. His stature was such as to give point to the remark; but he could never have been called little in any other respect. Neither his fortune nor his philanthropy was due to accident. Each was the fruit of his nature and the child of his purpose. This characteristically American career, which began in a lowly home, achieved its first triumphs by the slow and toilsome processes of industry, honesty, frugality, and self-denial. When its larger

opportunities came, the man had so disciplined himself that he knew how to make the most of them. He could master a situation, because he had first mastered himself.

His life, from first to last, was the fruit after its kind of that New England Puritan spirit which has truth for its staple and righteousness for its practical aim,—the spirit which achieves by the energy of an unconquerable purpose. Throughout his career there is evidence of mental power; the power to plan large enterprises and to provide for their execution. He could measure men, and knew how to use them. He did nothing without thought. Reflection was the habit of his life. In consequence, watchful friends have been able to trace his intellectual growth, and especially in these later years. He was an educated man, in distinction from a scholar; and he had been for the most part his own teacher.

Intelligence, in him, was ever tending to work itself out as wisdom. He was shrewd, far-sighted, prudent. The spirit of the Hebrew wisdom pervaded his thoughts. The book of Proverbs was his delight. In other than sacred literature it was the homely, practical, every-day philosophy, that embodies itself in maxims, upon which he liked to linger. His own style of expression was often pithy, pointed, proverbial. He could pack a pound of meaning into an inch of space, if the subject was one upon which he had thought much.

He missed the defect of this quality so far as a

fallible man can hope to escape the extremes of his tendencies. He was scrupulous as well as shrewd. Honesty was not his policy; it was his principle. His conscience reigned supreme in his life. When he thought he had discovered what he ought to do, he was restless until he had done it, and regardless of consequences to himself, or of criticism from others, when he had acted. Not that he was insensible to criticism. In his address at the last "Founder's Day" celebration of the Institute, he said, addressing his sons and co-trustees: "The world will overestimate your ability, and will underestimate the value of your work; will be exacting of every promise made or implied; will be critical of your failings; will often misjudge your motives and hold you to strict account for all your doings." The words reflect, undoubtedly, something of his own suffering occasioned by false judgment. But he never wavered under such criticism. He dared to face men when he was acting in the fear of God. One who is a judge of character, an educator who has known him well, has said of him since his death, "He was a just man." All who knew Charles Pratt knew this to be true. If he has done any one a wrong, it was a wrong he did not intend. It was impossible to him to calculate mischief or disadvantage for his fellows. He may not have seen the whole sphere of duty and opportunity; but duty was, nevertheless, his one watchword; to do what he ought for God and fellowman his only aim.

I have said of him before that he was a true son

of Puritan New England. I must say of him, further, that his rigorous sense of right was made beautiful by some of the gifts and graces of the spirit to which the Puritans were strangers. His was a cheerful life. He was a friend of children. He had to the last a child's spirit and playfulness. There was a deep well-spring of tenderness within him. Tears were often in his eyes. No noble ideal of life or feeling was ever presented to him but that the flashing response of his face revealed the man. He was the brother of his own children. His home was to him the fairest spot on the earth. He filled it with sunshine. Outside of his business, his church, and his philanthropy, it was his only sphere. He needed neither club nor playhouse to afford him rest; his home sufficed. For those who use such diversions he had no criticism. In these matters he was neither narrow nor ascetic. Horace Bushnell's phrase describes his feeling: He was "free to use amusements; too free to want them." A delightful freedom characterized his home life. He made it a place of nurture, but without undue constraint. Its center was the altar of prayer. Simple in his tastes, he lived an economical life; but his economy was of that thoughtful order which is far removed from parsimony. He was temperate in all things save his devotion to his self-appointed tasks. He died in his office. I am not sure that he would have wished to die elsewhere. He never spared himself. He lived industriously because he believed that only thus could he live righteously. He spent himself so constantly because

this was the only salvation in which he believed: a salvation purchased by sacrifice and manifested in self-surrender.

And so I am brought to say that the mainspring of his life was Jesus Christ. How often some of us have heard him confess that this was the case. Do not think that I have been blind in what I have said, either to his weaknesses or his faults. He had both. No one was more conscious of them than himself. He was humble. His dependence was upon his Saviour. His Christian faith colored all he did. It was the motive within and behind his beneficence. It was the constraining power which compelled his unstinted consecration of himself. It was the prevailing idea in his scheme of education. He saw in Jesus Christ a man as well as a divine Saviour—a perfect man, in whom character was regnant, but a man who preferred to be a toiler; a man who had learned a trade; a man who taught other men, as the life of God flowed through him, how sacred was every range of human life and activity, how blessed, everywhere, was obedience. Mr. Pratt sought, therefore, to bring others into fellowship with the man Christ Jesus. He would have them taught to toil, and to find in work the blessedness of life and its satisfaction; in the home, its most sacred sphere. It was to this end he built the Institute and endowed it. It was largely the child of his own brain. It is the result of a masterful process of synthesis, after a long season of critical and persevering study of the problems involved, and the attempts hitherto made

toward their solution. Its immediate and phenomenal success is the proof of his intelligence and sagacity. Its future usefulness will be his abiding and sufficient memorial.

Breadth was characteristic of him in his views both of education and of religion. Though he was the special friend of manual training, the prosperity of the Adelphi Academy, in part due to his liberality and watch-care, is a proof that he esteemed, also, the literary and classical methods in education. The proof is strengthened by his gifts to the University of Rochester and to Amherst College. His gift to the Rochester Seminary is evidence that his interest included theological as well as secular culture. True to the beliefs and to the order of that branch of the Church of Christ to which he belonged, he was a broad and catholic Christian. Liberal as he was to the enterprises of his own church and denomination, no money was ever given by him, nor any word ever spoken, for a merely sectarian purpose.

I speak that which I know, and testify to what I have seen. Such a life is so full of holy and helpful lessons as to deserve analysis. It is a precious heritage to his family, to the church, to this city, and to the world at large. Our loss for the moment seems immeasurable. But God makes no mistakes. "He buries his workmen; but he carries on his work." Nor does he forget to reward the workers. Listen to the Apostle John, as he describes what he heard on Patmos: "I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write,

Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors; and their works do follow them." Surely, as Charles Pratt's works bear fruit in the life to come, his share in the joy of his Lord will be large indeed. We sorrow not, as those who are without hope. In his Saviour let us find our consolation; in his character, our example.

A TRIBUTE TO CHARLES PRATT

BY HENRY C. FOLGER, JR.

FOUNDER'S DAY ADDRESS, OCTOBER 2, 1903

I THANK you for the privilege of saying a few words about Charles Pratt. Not simply that I would acknowledge the help he gave me. Nor even to state that he was, apart from his friendship, an inspiration in my life, but because I think I can tell something of the secret of his success. I knew him intimately for twenty years. I was a school-boy in whom he took an interest; a college student whom he followed as coming from the academy of which he was president; a clerk in his office, enjoying his confidence; and a personal friend in his home. I think I knew Charles Pratt.

That he was a wonderfully successful man, goes without saying. But you may not expect to hear that his success had no element of chance in it, not even his good fortune in business. For he had, to a remarkable degree, the traits which compel success in any one. And yet he had no gifts which you and I do not enjoy. I presume more than one-half those listening to me have greater natural endowment than was vouchsafed Mr. Pratt. He was a man of many limita-

tions; lacked much which would seem well-nigh indispensable for a career as successful as his. His power came from keen concentration, coupled with a devout consecration of all he had. If you and I fail, it is because we are content to be less unselfish and less in earnest. It is not for me to eulogize Charles Pratt. That should be done by eloquent lips. But I can tell you about him, and how, with no greater endowment than you and I have, he achieved much.

He had the charm of modesty. But modesty did not check his self-reliance. The press of Brooklyn and New York pained him greatly by commenting on the fact that he failed to make his Institute free. I believe he never answered the criticism. But the thought had been with him from the start, and he discussed the question many times, long before the press drew attention to it. Himself a self-reliant man, and the primary aim of his Institute being to make others self-reliant, Mr. Pratt's instinct taught him that self-esteem can be preserved only by independence, and instead of making the Institute free, he devised the plan whereby we may all accept his bounty without hesitation, because without shock to our self-respect.

In business Charles Pratt was the soul of honor. Shrewd, certainly, sagacious, far-sighted, but the trait which helped him most was trustfulness, as it led him to seek as associates men abler than himself. Then he had a simplicity of character which made such men ready in their turn to trust him. Beyond question, there are a few men fortunate in business, who seem

to reap where they have not sown. But they are fewer than you young people imagine. Mr. Pratt was not among them. He won his wealth.

By temperament he was irresolute. This hampered him greatly. He did not reach conclusions quickly. Most of us procrastinate. This was not true of Mr. Pratt. But his mind came to its decisions slowly. He was more than conscious of this; struggled vigorously against it. For example, soon after his death I found myself placed by business duties at a desk which had seen better days. Young men in business do not often have new desks. Among its many scars was a jagged hole in the top, where your hand and eye could not miss it. The desk had been used for a time by Mr. Pratt, and a broker told me the story of the jagged hole. He was trying one day to get Mr. Pratt to name a definite price for a cargo of oil. "Why are you so irresolute," he exclaimed sharply; "how can a broker ever trade with you?" "You are right," Mr. Pratt replied; "my worst fault. Perhaps this will help me to correct it," and, taking a nail that happened to lie near, he hammered it into the top of his costly desk. That desk should find a home, here, among the treasures of the Institute.

He taught us young men by example, rather than precept. His example said: Do not be too eager for recognition; be careful to give full measure; be sure quality is not impaired; do not be ashamed of frugality. He once told me that the first ten thousand dollars was the hardest to accumulate; after that, additional

sums came more and more easily. By instinct he knew that the first savings established the habit of self-denial, making acquisition easy. I have known instances where, to induce a start in saving, he paid ten per cent. interest, although he was able to earn scarcely five per cent. with the money given him. Before our eyes he coupled thrift with sagacity; industry with patience. Yes, he was an untiring worker! Wealth came naturally to such a combination of traits.

A man must be an optimist to engage in the petroleum industry even now; but this was doubly true when Mr. Pratt started. You are so dependent upon the bounty of Nature, and only those succeed who have the wide faith that supports bold ventures. It was quite in keeping, therefore, that Mr. Pratt should have been, in many ways, a pioneer in establishing his Institute. Fortunately, he did not concentrate his benefactions on the Adelphi Academy, to which he gave much, and of which he was the life for many years; nor upon Amherst College, where his interest might have anticipated a line of six sons as graduates. Other men could and have built up those institutions. But a unique school like this might never have been founded but for Charles Pratt. The work goes on so smoothly; the organization seems so natural; that to you, students and instructors, the conception of the plan appears easy. But a broad industrial school was not known when he worked out his design. In most respects he was a discoverer, or, better, an inventor. That his plan has proved so admirable is tribute enough to his

inventive genius. And, like all doers of great deeds, he was lonely in the fashioning of his enterprise, doubtful of its success. I well recall how eagerly he questioned all of us who were college graduates, giving us glimpses of his project, and how we responded with little or no help. I believe his representatives visited foreign schools, and he went abroad himself in search of suggestions. But Pratt Institute had no prototype, because there was nothing like it to copy. It was evolved by the persistent thought of a consecrated man; a task doubly hard because he lacked the help of schooling for himself and the advice of trained minds. It was something of a joke in his home, that he would rise during the night to note some point which had occurred to him, or to solve some problem which had eluded him during the day.

It has sometimes seemed to me as though Mr. Pratt had a vision, more or less imperfect to be sure, of a new solution of the labor problem, a problem quite as troublesome in his day as in ours. Labor unions aim to better the condition of the working man by raising wages; and the object of most industrial institutions, including this one, is to make workers worthy of higher compensation. But no one has ever before thought of making the compensation and wages, be they large or small, themselves worth more. It is waste that keeps men poor. While Mr. Pratt planned to teach workers to fit themselves for higher tasks, he also devised the study of thrift to counteract waste. The plaint of Haggai, the prophet of old, was "He

that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes." Mr. Pratt seems to respond, "I will show how wages may be deserved and earned. I will, at the same time, teach you economy and thrift—how to stop the holes in the bag into which the wages go."

The man I would show you well deserves the recognition of this hour. And I have done my part if I have pictured him as one who made himself great by consecration and earnestness, not content to have gathered by tireless industry a fortune for the good of his fellows, letting others put his benefactions into concrete form, he must needs, himself, evolve the plan and perfect the organization which have gone on so smoothly since his death. It was hard for him to give. I had almost forgotten to say that. Do you wonder when you are told that his self-denial to secure a start in life was more severe than most men could endure? He sometimes lacked even sufficient food and adequate shelter. But in the end he gave not only his means—he gave himself. Emerson puts it, "Rings and other jewels are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only gift is a portion of thyself." And Mr. Pratt, never having read Emerson, thought out his own motto, even more terse and eloquent, "The giving which counts is the giving of one's self." Concentration made acquisition possible; consecration made giving natural. "When he discovered what he thought he ought to do, he was restless until he had done it."

I am conscious how imperfectly I have presented the character of my friend; for, after all, he was more

than the sum of even all his characteristics, and I have mentioned but a few. As Hamlet said of his honored father:

> "He was a man, take him for all in all;
> I shall not look upon his like again."

No, I do his memory wrong finishing with that quotation. We shall, we do, look upon his like now and here in these sons, who, with such filial devotion, are carrying on the work of this Institute—Charles Pratt's best monument.

PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS OF CHARLES PRATT

BY CHARLES R. RICHARDS

CHARLES PRATT died in 1891, only three years after the opening of the institution he had founded and which bears his name. Those three years, however, were sufficient to impress his personality upon the young organization so strongly that it has survived to the present time. When a vivid personality passes away from earth, the direct influence of his presence ceases. How long and how deeply his indirect influence continues, depends largely upon the ideals reflected in his deeds and words. Of deeds, Charles Pratt left a generous measure. Of words, there still live and will live some of high inspiration.

To those associated with the early days of Pratt Institute there must constantly recur the desire to recreate the personality of the Founder, and to keep alive by every possible means his human qualities, that these may in some measure continue to be the inspiration to the student body and instructors that they were in the beginning days.

Charles Pratt was a genuine product of American life. As was once said of him, he belonged to the only true nobility in America, "the men who do not

inherit a great name, but make one for themselves." With a very modest equipment with which to start life, Charles Pratt had in his make-up a richer heritage than most young men of his age, whatever their apparent advantages. Once in a while nature concentrates an extraordinary amount of nervous energy in a single individual. When this is combined with exceptional generosity of heart and capacity for straight thinking, the result is likely to add a page, or even a chapter, to the social history of a people.

That such a man should build up a large fortune is not to be wondered at. Many Americans have achieved this. It is the uses to which Charles Pratt dedicated that fortune in the latter years of his life that mark him as a rare person. His business career brought wide contacts with men of the world and great responsibilities. It undoubtedly further strengthened his intellectual sympathies, and gave him increasing insight into human nature. Joined to this richness of experience in the world of affairs was the mellowing influence of a happy family life; and the spiritual ripening that came from participation in the activities of his church.

These were some of the forces, combined with native qualities of mind and heart, that made Charles Pratt in the early eighties turn his thoughts to the foundation of an educational institution. After studying many schools both in this country and in Europe, and after listening to many ideas, he decided upon the plan of Pratt Institute. Here, in 1887, was born a real child

of his brain, of his experience, and of his convictions about life. To this child he gave almost as much love and care as to his sons and daughters.

Much had been accomplished in the United States in the field of engineering education, when the Institute was founded. For twenty years and more, engineering schools had been multiplying in different parts of the country. There existed also a number of trade schools of varying types for the mechanical and building trades. The field of secondary technical education, however, was bare of institutions aiming at the instruction of the foreman, designer, draftsman, and technician. In Europe there were many schools that provided instruction in science and technology for this very important class of workers, but in the United States there was none. Into this field the Institute entered as a pioneer. Moreover, there were but one or two important schools in this country offering evening classes in science and technology. Such classes, which reach young men already at work, had a special interest for Mr. Pratt, and to the development of this kind of instruction the Institute devoted serious attention from the first.

Domestic art and science had been introduced to some degree into school curricula as culture subjects, but at this time nothing had been accomplished toward solving the more serious problem of vocational training in these fields. To this, also, the new institution addressed itself.

The art department occupied a conspicuous place

in the new school. It is rather striking, when one considers the practical character of Mr. Pratt's mind, that the first department to be opened was that of Fine and Applied Art, which from the first placed emphasis upon industrial art and the training of teachers for the public schools.

When one looks back upon this program it is evident that many of its elements represented fresh adventures in educational practice, and when one further considers the value of these innovations that the years have so fully justified, it is evident that a mind possessed of rare and sympathetic understanding of the needs of the time, combined with exceptional constructive imagination, was needed for its formulation.

When the Institute was opened, Mr. Pratt maintained a daily contact with its officers, and even with its students. It is the memory of his presence in those days that we of the original staff cherish so dearly. Magnetic, but with none of the advantages of imposing figure, he was an arresting person in any company. Strength was evident in a firm mouth over which a dry smile often flitted. His keen, searching eyes, however, were the feature that most of all gave life to his face.

One of Mr. Pratt's most remarkable and endearing qualities was his belief in young people. We to whom he gave the responsibility of carrying on the institution, so dear to his heart, were all young, and we strove hard to be worthy of his trust. It was this communicated spirit of the Founder that created in Pratt Insti-

tute in those early days a rare atmosphere of loyalty and enthusiasm.

The daily visits of Mr. Pratt were our inspiration; through them he kept us on our mettle, checked our mistakes, and encouraged us to further efforts. It was his habit in these morning visits to enter by the front door of the Institute, and pay a brief visit to those departments located nearby; then he would pass to the rear buildings, and last of all look in upon the office of the Trade and Technical Department, then located near the Grand Avenue door. By this time, he would be harried by the thoughts of the problems awaiting him in his New York office, and my chances of a conference with him were reduced to a catch-as-catch-can encounter. Usually he would leave me at the back door, but often I clung to his coat-tails until he reached the elevated station. On occasions I held on into the train, and journeyed with him to the Brooklyn Bridge. In those days I thought how fortunate were the departments located near the front door of the Institute!

Some of the small happenings of these daily visits are among the things that remain longest in the memory. One morning I had a visitor representing a very prominent man of wealth in the Middle West who was considering the establishment of an educational institution concerning which his ideas were not very clearly defined. The agent asked me many questions about details of the Institute organization. At this juncture Mr. Pratt came into my office. He did not attempt to

answer any of the many questions propounded, but said to the visitor, "You tell Mr. Blank that the giving that counts is the giving of oneself."

On the occasion of the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Celebration of Pratt Institute in 1912, I spoke the following words, expressive of my feeling for the Institute of which I was so long a part, and of its Founder with whom I had been so closely associated:

"To those of us who became attached to the Institute early in our professional lives, Pratt Institute will always seem about the newest and youngest thing on this planet. This is, of course, not a matter of years at all, but a spirit and a quality which resides in the way things have always been done here; and as I have thought over the matter in the last few days I have come to the conclusion that this dinner is simply a conspiracy to give the appearance of age to an institution which is forever bound to be young and fresh and hopeful. Such an attempt, I am sure, can never succeed, for it is just this spirit of youth and hopefulness, of coöperation and fellowship, that has made Pratt Institute what it is, that has made it the thing we love. It is this spirit that brings us here to-night glad to meet its quickening influence once more for a few hours, and it is this spirit that is going to make the Pratt Institute of the future all it has been in the past, —an institution that can never grow old.

"Pratt Institute was founded not to glorify a name, but for the highest thing in human life: for service. There was no special educational theory back of it,

and no hard and fast scheme. It was simply an honest effort to "help the other fellow." This is one of the things I like most to remember about the early days of the Institute, because in most educational institutions they know just exactly what ought to be done, and how to do it. We didn't; we just tried to find out, and we had a lot of fun in the finding.

"It has been my fortune to be connected with two institutions that have had remarkable and great-hearted men for their founders. In both of these cases the inspiration that has come down from them has been a far greater benefaction than the material endowment they left behind. It has made the spirit of service forever the ideal before officers and teachers.

"Fortunate indeed is the institution that has such a man for its founder, and twice fortunate is Pratt Institute in not only having such a man to look back to, but in having still with it the sons that have come after him, who have carried forward the ideals of the Founder until they have become a force not only in this community, but in the nation. It is to them as well as to his memory that I am glad to pay my tribute tonight."

Two hundred and fifty copies printed on Hand and Arrows paper, and bound in boards for private distribution

James A. Anderson, Printer, New York

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library
1 1012 01041 2205